



Greenkeepers Training Committee

This month Frank Newberry, a GTC Quality Assured Training Provider, is invited to share some of his thoughts on greenkeeping professionalism

GREENKEEPING PROFESSIONALISM - THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

In 1989, when David Golding commenced his role as BIGGA's Education Director, the then Board of Management agreed to the development of a week-long Management Course to be held at its then new Headquarters, Aldwark Manor.

Amongst the tutors invited to train Head Greenkeepers and Deputies was management training guru Frank Newberry.

Thousands of greenkeepers have benefitted from Frank's training and hundreds have received his personal support over the 25 years of his involvement with our sector.

Frank said: "The biggest change for me over the years has been the ongoing increase of BIGGA's education and training provision.

"They have presided over a massive expansion in the services and education they offer to their members.

"It seems a lifetime ago since the first week-long Management Courses were held at BIGGA's Headquarters, yet the vision by the then staff and Board of BIGGA has been developed, improved and rolled out through the annual gathering in Harrogate, as well as regional and section events.

"I prepared for the inaugural management courses by visiting a variety of golf clubs ranging from a high profile resort to proprietary owned and a private members clubs.

"I found a common problem at all of these venues: the Head Greenkeepers were all very committed, passionate individuals and very competent in maintaining their golf course but lacked the confidence and skills to deal with staff and employer issues.

"The majority of employers wanted their Head Greenkeepers to be able to improve their supervisory and management skills whilst



understanding that their work on the course was the number one priority.

"In other words, the employers wanted the best of both worlds and I think that is still true today.

"So how could we reach those people who were not attending college-based courses?

"Seminars, workshops and conferences arranged by BIGGA have benefitted hundreds of those individuals who have taken the opportunity to improve their "off course" skills.

"Presentations - to Green Meetings or at interviews - have changed enormously over the years with technology being used more and more.

"However, body language, the style of presenting and preparing for any type of meeting also needed addressing.

"Over the years there have been many wonderful examples of how individuals' lives have changed both on and off the golf course through the training they have received.

"I am very proud to have been part of the trainer team selected to

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help improve not just the communication skills of greenkeepers but hopefully have, in some small way, improved the professionalism and changed the perception of many, that greenkeepers, at all levels, are far more than grass cutters!

"We must continue to offer the fun, informal method of learning and BIGGA have clearly become best placed to keep this type of learning available.

"Regarding CPD, my view is straightforward - it should be compulsory i.e. compulsory professional development.

"So, please take advantage of any education and training available and employers also, encourage your staff to engage in CPD as the business will, without doubt, benefit from the new skills the staff gain by attending an event with "off course" training on the agenda."

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